However, in vast sections life and property were insecure. Armed bands, often of former soldiers, unpaid and lawless, roamed over large areas, bringing terror, bandits possessed large regions, and local organizations for mutual protection of peasants added to the confusion. In at least one region, Manchuria, ban^ dits formed a kind of second government. On the eve of the death of Chang Tso-lin they had an organization which covered much of the Three Eastern Provinces, with a head, with a division of territory, and with an espionage system and methods of discovering and levying on wealth which bore similarities to the contemporary "racketeers" of the United States. In spite of official disapproval by Nanking and Mukden, and of vigorous anti-Communist reactions in many places, Communism remained strong. Russian agents were still at work and numbers of the students were becoming Communists. In 1930-1933, indeed, large sections of the country, especially in Kiangsi, Anhui, Northern Fukien, and Hupeh, were in the hands of those who called themselves Communists. In the summer of 1930 Communists captured the capital of Hunan and held it for a few days. Some of the so-called Communists were led by men who knew a good deal of the Russian system and believed in it. Others knew very little of Western Communism but used the slogan as an excuse for murder and robbery. The majority of "Communists," indeed, were really bandits or locally independent military groups. To-most of them Communism, whether comprehended or not, was a philosophy of despair, a possible way out of the personal and collective suffering into .which the Chinese had been thrown. The movement, too, was in large part one of land-hungry peasants to

appropriate the holdings of their neighbors and the well-to-do. Campaigns waged against Communists by Chiang Kai-shek and his associates in 1930 and 1931 were interrupted by dissensions within government ranks and by the Sino-Japanese crisis of 1931.

The most serious rift in the ranks of the Nationalist Party in 1931 was the protest against the rule of Chiang Kai-shek by a -number of leaders of varied political background. In the spring, these malcontents gathered at Canton and there set up a govern-ment which claimed to represent the Kuomintang but which re-pudiated Chiang Kai-shek. The Manchurian crisis of the autumn tended to encourage negotiations. The collapse of Chang Hsiieh-